



## **The 1728 Musin Rebellion (Musillan ) Approaches, Sources and Questions**

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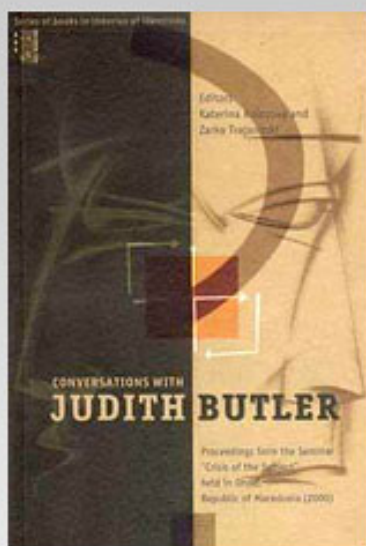
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## THE 1728 MUSIN REBELLION (MUSILLAN 戊申亂): APPROACHES, SOURCES AND QUESTIONS

ANDREW DAVID JACKSON<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *The 1728 Musin Rebellion (Musillan 戊申亂): Approaches, Sources and Questions.* The 1728 Musin Rebellion was the most serious military challenge to King Yǒngjo's rule, and the rebels gained widespread popular support. This article analyses the scholarly understandings of the rebellion, investigates important primary sources available to researchers, and identifies important unanswered questions about the rebellion. Most scholars have analysed the attempt to overthrow King Yǒngjo's government using the systems/value-consensus approach to rebellion. Such explanations leave unanswered key questions concerning the rebel failure, the fratricidal character of the rebellion and the reason for the initiation of violence. Many official and unofficial sources exist, but the development of strategies to deal with the problems of truncated sources, factional bias and the reliability of rebel testimony remain unaddressed.

**Keywords:** 1728, Musin rebellion, Musillan, Yǒngjo, factionalism, theory of rebellion, late Chosŏn history

**REZUMAT.** *Răscoala Musin din 1728 (Musillan 戊申亂): Abordări, surse și întrebări.* Răscoala Musin din 1728 a fost cea mai serioasă provocare militară la adresa domniei regelui Yǒngjo, răsculații dobândind un amplu sprijin popular. Prezentul articol analizează studiile despre răscoală, investighează importante surse primare accesibile cercetătorilor și identifică întrebări esențiale despre răscoală, încă fără răspuns. Cei mai mulți cercetători au analizat încercarea de a distruge guvernarea regelui Yǒngjo din prisma teoriei consensului de sisteme/valori. Astfel de abordări lasă fără răspuns întrebări-cheie despre eșecul răzvrătiților, caracterul fratricid al răscoalei și motivul începerii violențelor. Există multe surse oficiale și neoficiale, dar rămân nediscutate chestiuni precum dezvoltarea unei strategii de tratare a problemelor surselor fragmentare, părtinirii faționale și a mărturiilor rebelilor.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** 1728, Răscoala Musin, Musillan, Yǒngjo, faționalism, teoria răscoalei, istoria târzie a dinastiei Chosŏn

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### The Musin rebellion

The 1728 Musin rebellion was the largest sustained outbreak of collective violence in eighteenth century Chosŏn (朝鮮) Korea, and an attempt to overthrow King Yŏngjo's (英祖, reigned 1724-1776) government by military means.<sup>2</sup> During three weeks of fighting the government lost control of thirteen county seats, and the rebels drew great support from people in Kyŏnggi, North Ch'ungch'ŏng, South Ch'ungch'ŏng and South Kyŏngsang Provinces. The Musin rebellion had its roots in the factional conflict that dominated the Chosŏn court between the sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries. In two hundred years of factionalism, violence had rarely spread beyond the confines of the court; the last large scale military assault on power by factional members had been the Injo Restoration (仁祖反正) in 1623 and Yi Kwal's (李适의亂) rebellion in 1624.<sup>3</sup> Chosŏn factions have been defined as 'political associations on a quest for power,' and by the time of the Musin rebellion, five groups were contending for power: the Noron (老論, Old Doctrine), the Namin (南人, Southerners), and the Soron (少論 Young Doctrine) with its two wings, the Chunso (峻少, extremists) and the Wanso (緩少, moderates).<sup>4</sup> Most rebels were Chunso and Namin supporters who claimed loyalty to Kyŏngjong (景宗, reigned 1720-24) and were antagonistic towards his half-brother Yŏngjo and the Noron faction that supported him. Rebels claimed Yŏngjo was unfit to govern because he usurped the throne by having Kyŏngjong killed. The Musin rebellion, however, was *not* merely a fight between two clearly identifiable factional sides; it had a fratricidal character as well. The rebellion erupted a few months after Yŏngjo's attempt to mollify factionalism, the removal of the Noron from power and the restoration of the Soron to office in 1727. The 1727 Soron restoration meant rebels were aided by a small group of fifth-columnists who were plotting against Yŏngjo from within government, and meant that Soron rebels were plotting to overthrow their comrades. Not all Namin were unified against the crown either; Namin from Andong (North Kyŏngsang Province) refused to join Namin from South Kyŏngsang Province in the rebellion. After seventeen violent days, the rebels were annihilated by government forces led by Wanso officials supported by some Noron.<sup>5</sup>

### Approaches

Interest in the Musin rebellion has traditionally come from South Korean scholars, perhaps because the rebellion was centered in the southern part of the Korean peninsula. Scholarly examination has largely followed nationalist narratives concerned with

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<sup>2</sup> This work was carried out with the generous support of The Korea Foundation and The Academy of Korean Studies, Dr Anders Karlsson, Dr Codruta Cuc, Perry Iles, and Bae Wonae. Musillan means Musin year rebellion, where Musin is the forty-fifth term of the sexagenary cycle. The Chosŏn dynasty: 1392- 1905.

<sup>3</sup> For more on the Injo Restoration and Yi Kwal's rebellion, see Palais 1996, 94-7.

<sup>4</sup> Haboush 1988, 119.

<sup>5</sup> Cho Ch'anyong 2003, 60.

disproving the stagnation hypothesis of Japanese colonial historiography, which legitimized imperial intrusion. Colonial historians argued that factionalism was endemic to the Korean psyche and evidence of this stagnation.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Nationalist scholars highlight the dynamism and development within late-Chosŏn society, using this nationalist framework to justify the Musin rebellion either as an extension of court political conflict, an anomaly in a period of otherwise enlightened rule, or as evidence of rapid change in late-Chosŏn society. A significant proportion of scholars has also argued that the rebellion was driven by regional dynamics. This article serves as a tool for future researchers of the Musin rebellion; it analyses the various scholarly approaches to the violence, it examines important primary sources, and finally it details important unresolved questions about 1728.

Prior to the 1980s, most historians saw the Musin rebellion almost solely in terms of factionalism and the earliest interpretations viewed it as conflict between central and regional factions. Yi Usŏng (1959), Yi Sangok (1969) and Yi Wŏngyun (1971) identify a political crisis that led to the economic and political disenfranchisement of the Kyŏngsang province elites. Yi Usŏng believes after the Injo restoration, a political split occurred between the central Noron/Soron controlling elite and the provincial Namin powers.<sup>7</sup> Later scholars such as Sŏng Nak'hun (1979) and O Kapkyun (1977 & 1985) ignore the regional dynamics and stress the court-centred factional conflict surrounding the succession of Yŏngjo, following the suspicious death of Kyŏngjong. Sŏng makes no attempt to situate the conflict in the context of wider social problems.<sup>8</sup> O Kapkyun sees the rebellion as an attempt by extreme Soron and permanently excluded Namin to regain their political positions by overthrowing Yŏngjo.<sup>9</sup> The reason for the initiation of the rebellion is 'accumulated factionalism,' but O is unclear about why this should have escalated into military violence in 1728.<sup>10</sup> Such representations of the Musin rebellion are principally found in modern South Korean textbooks.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to understand why historians represent the Musin rebellion as a conflict limited to factionalism, since armed violence spread across the entire southern half of the Korean peninsula. The implication may be that the government was increasingly out of touch with people who were experiencing massive social change; bureaucrats turned on each other in vicious fighting, ignoring the true development occurring in wider society. By examining such factionalism, Nationalist scholars may also have been tackling head on the Colonial historiographical notions of an endemic factionalism.

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<sup>6</sup> Ko Suyŏn 2004, 200.

<sup>7</sup> Yi Usŏng 1959, 724-5

<sup>8</sup> Sŏng Nak'hun 1979.

<sup>9</sup> O Kapkyun 1977, 66-8.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>11</sup> Yun Naehyŏn et al 2005, 377.

One Yŏngjo scholar, Jahyun Kim Haboush (1988), characterizes the rebellion as a ‘minor fracas amongst outcasts.’<sup>12</sup> Failure is treated as inevitable, because the rebellion was an anomaly in an otherwise enlightened period of rule by Yŏngjo.<sup>13</sup> Haboush believes there was a flowering of relatively enlightened rule, especially in the mid to late eighteenth-century reigns of two kings, Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo (reigned: 1776-1800).<sup>14</sup> This period represents prosperity, stability and cultural development in Korean history, a direction in which Korea might have continued were it not for incompetent government and foreign imperial encroachment.<sup>15</sup> This view of the period is particularly significant because it has fed into popular dramatic representations and might explain why the Musin rebellion is often simply ignored or portrayed as an inconvenient blip during a period of enlightened rule.<sup>16</sup> Haboush’s contention that the Musin rebellion was uncharacteristic of the times, however, does not clarify why the rebels managed to mobilize widespread popular support.

The most comprehensive analysis of the Musin rebellion was conducted by what I call structural historians, especially those associated with the 1980s *minjung* (民衆, or repressed people’s) movement engaged in anti-dictatorship struggle. These scholars considered the *minjung* to be agents of change in the development of Korean society and argue the Musin rebellion was more than an extension of court politics.<sup>17</sup> 1980s scholarly analysis of the Musin rebellion makes no reference to *any* specific theoretical framework, either because of a desire for a ‘common-sensical’ approach, or doubts over the applicability of Western theoretical frameworks to a late Chosŏn cultural context.<sup>18</sup> However, whether intentional or not, most scholarly approaches analyse the Musin rebellion using notions similar to Chalmers Johnson’s systems/value-consensus theory as well as theories of class-consciousness: a systemic breakdown, an increasing sense of anger and disequilibrium amongst non-elites and marginalized elites, the role of an ideological party in creating a rebel movement, all pivoting around a crisis point which sets the rebellion in motion.<sup>19</sup> Structural scholars account for the Musin rebellion by emphasizing a dual political and structural crisis.<sup>20</sup> This period saw the unraveling of a rigid class system alongside economic expansion.<sup>21</sup> With the growth of a commercial economy and a market system, the rural ‘moral’ economic structures

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<sup>12</sup> Haboush 1988, 142.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1988.

<sup>14</sup> Haboush 1988, 233.

<sup>15</sup> For further details, see Park Chan-seung 1999, 341.

<sup>16</sup> Like the South Korean MBC televised drama, *Yi San* (2007).

<sup>17</sup> Min 2003, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Karlsson 2000, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Crisis-free societies have internally consistent institutions; crises cause members of society to experience ‘disequilibrium’ after which people act in ‘deviant’ ways and resort to violent rebellion. Skocpol 1994, 105.

<sup>20</sup> Kim Sun Joo explains marginalized elites as those ‘living in peripheral regions’ in late Chosŏn, and subject to ‘political discrimination’ (Kim Sun Joo 2007, 16). Yi Wŏngyun also uses an approach that resembles Johnson’s theory.

<sup>21</sup> Scholars appear to base their ideas about social breakdown on the ideas of Kim Yong-sŏp who argues increased land ownership helped propel lower class men into nobility (Shin 1978, 188).

protecting peasants began to unravel.<sup>22</sup> The result of these social changes was the ‘breakdown of feudal society.’<sup>23</sup> The ‘role and influence of the common people’ in resisting the ruling system increased and they promoted change through rebellion.<sup>24</sup> Although scholars mainly focus on rebellion during the nineteenth-century, they see change dating back to the eighteenth-century, and view the Musin rebellion as evidence of a developing consciousness of resistance.

Structural scholars fall into two types; the regional-structuralists such as Cho Ch’anyong (2003), Kōch’anggunsa (the history of the Kōch’ang area of South Kyōngsang Province, 1997), and Yi Chaech’ōl (1986), emphasise the political resistance of Kyōngsang Province elites. These scholars argue that Noron monopolisation of power destabilised the entire political system by disenfranchising both the Soron and the Namin of Kyōngsang Province. The regional-structuralists believe discontent arising from discrimination against Kyōngsang Province elites coincided with wider socio-economic stagnation and anger about tax exploitation resulting in rebellion. Thus, there was a two-fold dynamic at work behind the Musin rebellion: a regional dynamic and wider systemic change. The root of the rebellion was not only in the political situation that discriminated against regional elites, but also in the response of the lower classes to systemic disintegration.<sup>25</sup>

*Minjung* structural scholars Yi Chongbōm (1997 & 2003), and Chōng Sōkchong (1994) focus less on regional causes of the rebellion and concentrate on its ‘bottom-up’ characteristics. Yi Chongbōm sees the Musin rebellion in the context of a court political crisis and an ongoing attempt by lower classes to overthrow the medieval feudal system. The rebellion thus resulted from ‘internal political and structural’ contradictions.<sup>26</sup> Yi identifies cross-class hostility against the government as the link between elite and non-elite motivation, with each class developing a ‘resistance consciousness.’<sup>27</sup> Yi classifies the Musin rebellion as an anti-government coup that became a ‘military uprising’ and believes the rebellion was part of growing class conflict arising from social change.<sup>28</sup> For Yi Chongbōm, the Musin rebellion is important for what it says about the development of Korean society and a *minjung* consciousness. The rebellion is an ‘inevitable’ but ‘temporary bridging stage’ to a later more mature movement when a more effective challenge could be mounted; for example, the 1894-5 Tonghak rebellion (東學亂).<sup>29</sup> Chōng Sōkchong situates the Musin rebellion as part of an ongoing action from the *minjung* ‘movement’ at the vanguard of a drive to

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<sup>22</sup> Ko Sōkkyu 1992, 18.

<sup>23</sup> Shin 1978, 193.

<sup>24</sup> Han Sanggwōn 1992, 481.

<sup>25</sup> Cho Ch’anyong 2003, 13-17.

<sup>26</sup> Yi Chongbōm 2003, 228 & 289.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 227 & 289.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 283 & 288.

<sup>29</sup> Yi Chongbōm 2003, 209 & 289; Cho Kwang 1997, 12; Cho Ch’anyong 2003, 90.

overthrow the ‘regime,’ and create a new society.<sup>30</sup> Chŏng Sŏkchong identifies the period after the 1592-8 Hideyoshi (壬辰倭亂) and (1627, 1636) Manchu invasions (丁卯/丙子胡亂) as the start of this period of unrest. Evidence of this developing consciousness can be found in the activities of bandits, anti-landlord gangs and millennial (style) cult groups.<sup>31</sup> One component of systems/value-consensus explanations is the state’s capacity to correct the disequilibrium and avert rebellion. Musin scholars differ over their government’s corrective abilities, with Yi Chongbŏm questioning its capacity to affect anything more than ‘patch-up’ reforms,<sup>32</sup> and Cho Ch’anyong explaining the government’s post-rebellion social reforms as effective in preventing the reoccurrence of collective violence.<sup>33</sup>

There are a host of studies that deal with other aspects of the Musin rebellion. Kang Poksuk (1996) investigates the post-rebellion Noron-Soron political confrontation in Kyŏngsang province, Kim Sunsŏk (1992) analyses post-1728 plots and seditious poster incidents inspired by the Musin rebels. Yi, Kyeche’ŏn (2003) investigates the life of Yi Sam, a key figure in the government suppression of the Musin rebellion. Most of these authors share the assumptions of systemic breakdown taken from the systems/values-consensus theory.

Although scholars before and after 1980 contextualize the initiation of the rebellion in different ways, most scholars concur that the reasons for rebel failure were ideological.<sup>34</sup> O Kapkyun believes it was the failure to secure the mass support of the non-elites that sealed the rebels’ fate.<sup>35</sup> Instead of providing the *minjung* with ‘forward-thinking’ leadership, the rebels emphasized narrow factional issues like allegations of regicide against Yŏngjo and this failed to create a mass organization.<sup>36</sup> Only Yi Chongbŏm takes a different tack and argues tensions caused by intra-rebel class conflict destroyed the rebel organization; the Musin rebellion failed because it had come at a time when consciousness was not sufficiently developed.

### Recent English Language studies and Questions

The stress on teleological metanarratives of national development has distracted scholars from a more in-depth focus on the mechanics of the Musin rebellion itself, and causes for the initiation of violence in the immediate political context have been overlooked.<sup>37</sup> Frameworks of historical development are not always the best backgrounds against which to examine the particularity of a single event. Most

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<sup>30</sup> Chŏng Sŏkchong 1994, 129.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 121-4 & 166-7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 213-4-6, 289 & 1997, 176.

<sup>33</sup> Cho Ch’anyong 2003, 89

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>35</sup> O Kapkyun 1977.

<sup>36</sup> Yi Wŏngyun 1971, 86, & Yi Usŏng 1959, 728. ‘Forward-thinking’ indicates ideas of social emancipation and rights (Rudé 1985, 234).

<sup>37</sup> Only my study (Jackson 2011c) attempts to link the outbreak of violence to the 1727 Soron restoration.



structural representations of the rebellion present a rather static incident in an otherwise fluid period of development. For example, scholarly interest has generally focused on the initial motivations for elite and non-elite participation, and scholars have ignored the complex forces that motivated very different groups of rebels over the course of the rebellion. Studies of collective violence indicate that motivation and ideology in pre-modern contexts fluctuate over the course of action. Jack Goldstone argues that rebel organizations require ‘flexibility and compromise’ to deal with rapidly fluctuating political situations, so ‘leaders frequently shifted their policies in response to changing circumstances.’<sup>38</sup> In my studies (Jackson 2010 & 2011c) I attempt to trace the shifts in ideology and motivation during the plotting of the Musin rebels.

There are significant problems with teleological methodological frameworks that position the Musin rebellion in the context of the development of Korea towards modernity, and this means important questions remain unanswered about the rebellion. Structural scholars identify different political crisis points separated by long periods and many intervening developments, making it difficult to establish causal links. Scholars argue that the Musin rebellion was a bridging stage to a period of higher consciousness, yet there were no other major attempts at rebellion on the peninsula until the 1811 Hong Kyŏngnae rebellion (洪景來의 亂), and scholars produce no testimonial evidence that might link systemic change directly to the rebellion. Removing the assumption of a link between systemic change and the Musin rebellion opens up alternative explanations for the initiation of violence. There are many theoretical tools to interpret the initiation of rebellion and motivations of rebels that as yet remain unused by Musin rebellion scholars - the comparative frameworks of Theda Skocpol, for example. Scholars locate the Musin rebellion in the context of later nineteenth century rebellion, but comparisons of 1728 with earlier rebellions like Yi Kwal may prove fruitful because of the common use of fifth-columnist rebels.

Another problem lies in academic explanations for the failure of the rebellion. Musin rebellion scholars argue the rebel organization had developed strong enough alternative values to galvanize non-elites into participation, but this same ideology caused the rebel failure because it failed to draw enough support. Not enough research has gone into explaining the remarkable initial success of the rebel organization and its equally rapid disintegration on the battlefield. One underexplored direction is the organizational and military features of the rebellion. My studies (Jackson 2011b & c) investigate rebel military strategy and link the arming of the rebel organization with the participation of rebel fifth-columnists. However, there still needs to be a more thorough study of the government’s capacity to defend itself. Researchers like Diana Russell argue that the success or failure of rebellion depends to a vital extent on the military capacity of the state to defend itself.<sup>39</sup> Often, in their eagerness to prove systemic change by bottom-up forces, scholars neglect critical military and

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<sup>38</sup> Goldstone 1991, 416-9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-9.

organizational variables.

Another underexplored feature lies in the regional dynamics behind the Musin rebellion. Yi Chongbŏm carried out a breakdown of rebels according to class, but there has been no analysis of the regional breakdown of rebel support, which might provide clues to regional motivation. In addition, the reasons behind the withdrawal of Andong support for the rebellion have yet to be examined thoroughly. Overall, there has been little exploration of the fratricidal character of the rebellion, especially why some Soron opted to suppress their former political comrades on the battlefield.

### Sources and further questions

Yŏngjo was keen to highlight the rebel treachery and also to record the court's military victory, so there are many primary sources on the Musin rebellion written in literary Chinese. Most studies are based on an analysis of official sources like the *Yŏngjo sillok* (英祖實錄, the Veritable records of Yŏngjo's reign, hereafter *sillok*), which contains the most comprehensive overview of the entire rebellion.<sup>40</sup> The 785 *sillok* entries on the rebellion provide important insights into the decision-making process in both the court and the rebel organization, and include daily court reports about rebel attacks, information about rebel court infiltration, interrogations, rewards and punishments, the progress of government suppression forces, and the state of popular feeling in the countryside. The most complete study of the sources available to the researcher of the Musin rebellion was undertaken by Ko Suyŏn (2004), who lists fifteen other official records.<sup>41</sup> The *Musin yŏk'okch'uan* (戊申逆獄推案, trial record of the Musin rebels, written in literary Chinese and the scribe text, *idu* 吏讀) provides 1800 pages of rebel interrogation records. Interrogations were protracted processes, often lasting days, and these interrogation records are repetitive and reveal data in unfiltered form. In contrast, the *sillok* and the *Kamnannok* (勘亂錄, record of the rebel investigation) are highly edited and less detailed compilations of countrywide reports and interrogations.

In addition, there are *yasa* (野史) or unofficial histories (private memoirs) such as the anecdotal and factionally biased *Yakp'amannok* (藥坡漫錄, Yakp'a's record of trivia), written by Yi Hŭiryŏng (李希齡) about the Musin rebellion.<sup>42</sup> There is also a series of histories carved on six stone epitaphs which were erected in areas affected by the rebellion.<sup>43</sup> These were produced unofficially by Noron or Wanso supporters keen to celebrate the role of their faction in the rebel suppression and include *P'yŏng'yŏngnambimun* (平嶺南碑文, Epigraph to the pacification of Kyŏngsang Province) erected in 1780 in Taegu.<sup>44</sup> There are many other unofficial sources including diaries from soldiers serving in government forces and the *Munannok*

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<sup>40</sup> Ko Suyŏn 2004, 188.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>42</sup> Palais 1971, 590

<sup>43</sup> Cho Ch'anyong 2003, 136-49.

<sup>44</sup> Yi Usŏng 1959, 730.

(戊亂錄, Record of the Musin rebellion) which describes the state of the country.<sup>45</sup>

One particularly problematic area is the use of primary sources, particularly when the sources themselves had different functions. Original interrogation reports may provide more accurate records of what was said by rebels, and the use of truncated (*sillok*) reports raises the problem of editing. Information was filtered out for a purpose and the criteria for selection are unclear. Susan Naquin, in her analysis of eighteenth-century Chinese rebellion, is critical of researchers' use of the 'highly truncated accounts of interrogations' and maintains that other records lower down the bureaucratic filter provide far more relevant detail to researchers.<sup>46</sup> In the case of the *sillok*, there is some evidence that the king and his officials manipulated sources when they received information they considered inconvenient to the court; for example, accusations against royals or allegations against Yǒngjo.<sup>47</sup> *Sillok* records would be used in the compilation of a dynastic history and there was a strong urge to represent the King positively for posterity.<sup>48</sup> As yet there has been no research on information omitted from the filtered sources and its significance.

There is clear evidence of bias over coverage of the Musin rebellion. Historians often overstate the guilt of men from opposing factions. Occasionally, Noron bias can be seen in additional commentaries prefacing reports, the purpose of which is to persuade the reader (and later court officials) of the guilt of individuals in more ambiguous cases such as that of Chǒng Sahyo.<sup>49</sup> Ko Suyǒn categorises sources according to pro-Noron/Wanso, independent and pro-Chunso bias, and assumes Wanso and Noron constituted a single side in the anti-rebel camp. However, analysis of the Musillan epigraphs shows that in the aftermath of the rebellion, Wanso and Noron sources attempted to exaggerate the records of members of their own factions to gain political capital. The *P'yǒng'yǒngnambimun* epigraph was erected by Noron to celebrate the heroic deeds of a Noron official in a Namin area. It provided an unofficial, public account of events, but also, as a statement of Noron suppression of the rebellion, served as a warning to the local population. According to Ko Suyǒn, the *Kamnannok* expresses the position of the Wanso, while the unofficial record *Munannok* takes a 'neutral' position, but in these and other sources there is no analysis of how the authors express those particular positions. These questions, as well as others concerning bias in the sources, remain unresolved.

<sup>45</sup> Ko Suyǒn (2004).

<sup>46</sup> Naquin 1976, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Rebels approached a royal, Lord Milp'ung to replace Yǒngjo on the throne; however, Yǒngjo, at one stage ordered charges against Lord Milp'ung to be expunged from the records for unclear reasons. *Yǒngjo sillok* 04/05/09 (kimi) 18:9b-10a, pp. 56-7/42.

<sup>48</sup> Palais 1971, 584

<sup>49</sup> Chǒng was a Soron official accused of collusion with the rebels. See *Yǒngjo sillok* 03/12/16 (chǒng'yu) 14: 17a, p. 688/41.

The problems of filtered and unfiltered sources and factional bias is compounded by the credibility of interrogations carried out under torture, and it is unclear the extent to which such testimony can be trusted. Few scholars analyze primary sources using any strategy to overcome the above problems, and it is difficult to ascertain whether scholars take confessions at face value or cherry-pick information to emphasize bias of their own. The development of strategies to deal with the above issues of truncated sources, factional bias and coercion remains an open question.

The complex forces that produce rebellions do not give up their secrets easily. Political theorists continue to debate the causes of rebellions and the motivations of rebels, and it is surprising that a rebellion as complex as the Musin rebellion, an explosion of violence standing alone in a period of calm, has not attracted more academic attention. As the above paper has shown, more research is required before a full explanation of the Musin rebellion can be truly attempted.

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